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GOVERNMENT OF CANADA MAKES STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN YUKON ARTS COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMY

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Ottawa (June 20, 2008) - The Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, today announced funding to support the Yukon Arts Community through Canada's Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development (SINED) initiative.

"It is with great pride that our Government supports such innovative projects through this SINED initiative," Minister Strahl said. "Both the Yukon First Nations Arts Festival and the Comprehensive Film and Video Industry Development Program are excellent initiatives that showcase Yukon talent in the arts while fostering skills development and providing growth opportunities for Yukoners."

Through the SINED, Targeted Investment Program (TIP), Canada is investing in projects that will develop the arts economy in the Yukon. The Society of Yukon Artists of Native Ancestry (SYANA) will receive $120,000 from TIP to support the development of the first annual Yukon First Nations Arts Festival (YFNAF) taking place June 20-28th 2008.

The Yukon Film Society will receive $278,601 and the Northern Film and Video Industry Association will receive $120,307 through TIP for their collaborative Comprehensive Film and Video Industry Development Program. This program is a comprehensive training initiative that will develop and produce three short drama productions, providing training and workshops to members of the film industry.

"Film production is a lively art, which feeds both our culture and economy," said Heidi Slat, President of the Yukon Film Society. "Through training and collaboration, we aim to strengthen the Yukon film industry towards becoming an ongoing provider of expertise and professionally crafted films for the marketplace."

"We are excited about the benefits our industry will gain from offering more professional training to our local film crew," said Jessica Hall, board member of the Northern Film and Video Industry Association. "This program will help to increase our industry's capacity for production, for both local and outside producers."

"We welcome and are very grateful for Indian and Northern Affairs' support of local artists and hope to make this arts festival an annual event that benefits local artists and provides a great cultural event for all Yukoners," said Executive Director, E. Sonny Voyageur, of the Society of Yukon Artists of Native Ancestry. "In addition, INAC's generous support enables SYANA to execute a two-fold process in serving Yukon First Nations artists. First, it provides SYANA with the ability to acquire and develop suitable human resources skills. Second, it empowers Yukon First Nations Artists and affirms their status as a prominent force in film development in the Yukon."

These projects are funded through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's TIP under Canada's SINED initiative. INAC is committed to working with territorial governments, First Nations and Northerners to develop and support economic development initiatives that promote stronger, more sustainable economies and communities. The TIP is one of two main complementary programs under SINED, the other being the Innovation and Knowledge Fund.

This announcement reinforces the commitment in the recent Speech from the Throne to advance an integrated Northern Strategy focused on strengthening Canada's sovereignty, protecting our environmental heritage, promoting economic and social development, and improving and developing governance. Today's announcement supports improving economic opportunities and helping to meet the needs of Northerners, by strengthening the

Arts community as a sustainable and vital part of the Yukon economy.

Backgrounder - Strategic Investment in Yukon Arts

For further information please contact:

Shari-Lynn MacLellan
Communications Officer
Indian and Northern Affairs, Yukon
867-667-3848

E. Sonny Voyageur
Executive Director
Society of Yukon Artists of Native Ancestry
867-668-2695

Ross Burnet
General Manager
Yukon Film Society
867-667-6473

Jessica Hall
Board Member
Northern Film & Video Industry Association
867-456-2978

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Society of Yukon Artists of Native Ancestry (SYANA)

The Society of Yukon Artists of Native Ancestry (SYANA) will hold the first annual Yukon First Nations Arts Festival (YFNAF) this summer from June 20 - 28 at the Old Fire hall in downtown Whitehorse. The festival will unite emerging, established and master artists, craftspeople and performers in a week-long celebration that will showcase the diverse and creative talents of First Nations artists and provide participants with an opportunity to learn new skills and gain inspiration for their work. The festival program includes a professional gallery, artist demonstrations, creative workshops, business seminars and nightly performances that showcase Yukon's vibrant traditions, including drumming, stick gambling, moose hide tanning, storytelling and more.

INAC is contributing $120,000 to SYANA through Canada's Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development (SINED) initiative to the Yukon First Nations Arts Festival.

Yukon Film Society and the Northern Film & Video Industry Association

The Comprehensive Film and Video Industry Development Program is a collaborative, comprehensive training initiative involving the Yukon Film Society and the Northern Film & Video Industry Association. The project will develop and produce three short drama productions over several months and thereby provide intensive hands-on film training and workshops for producers, directors, writers and other film crew. The objectives of the project are to enhance and strengthen the skills of Yukon filmmakers in bringing stories effectively to the screen and to develop a skilled crew base to support production.

The Yukon Film Society will receive $278,601 and the Northern Film and Video Industry Association will receive $120,307 through SINED's Targeted Investment Program for their collaborative Comprehensive Film and Video Industry Development Program.

Strategic Investment in Northern Economic Development (SINED)

SINED is Indian and Northern Affair Canada (INAC)'s overall suite of northern economic development initiatives. Its goal is to promote the economic development of the North, in order to strengthen territorial economies and increase participation by Northerners. The investments made under SINED will help to generate important economic opportunities for Northerners, their businesses and their communities.

Targeted Investment Program (TIP)

TIP is part of a suite of northern economic development programs now being offered by INAC under the umbrella framework Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development. The program provides program dollars of six million per territory per year (2004 - 2005 to 2008 - 2009). Investments focus on four thematic areas: building the knowledge base; enhancing the economic infrastructure base; capacity development; and economic diversification. Investment plans are established for each territory, with the advice of northern governments and stakeholders, and are updated annually.